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Review Article

# Folkloric Traditions of Peryane Village

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## ABSTRACT

Folklore is common term around the globe while Afghanistan has rich folklore. In this article, traditions of the village of Peryane of Laghman province of Afghanistan in the context of Pashto folklore is explored. The value of this study is to preserve and explore the traditions of the village of Peryane and to present to the readers the identity of Noorlam Baba and the village of Peryane. Also, to reveal some folkloric items of the village of this village. In order to explore we employed library and field research. The research has been done in the light of descriptive and questioning method. Noorlam Baba shrine is in Noorlam Sahib Valley shrine village of Alingar district. To admire Noorlam Baba people name the entire valley in his name calling it Noorlam Baba Valley, which starts from Parwai and stretches to Kanda Gul. In other words, Noorlam Baba's village is now called a pilgrimage village. New Year, fairs, weddings, pilgrimages, and other such traditions are still practiced by people while some other practices have been disappeared. For instance, New Year celebration, again, eating fruits to make the year pass well or on the day of marriage are some traditions that have become either less colorful or disappeared.

**KEYWORDS:** *Folklore, Wedding Customs, Traditional Games, House-Building Customs, Water-Fetching Customs, Fortune-Telling Customs, Pilgrimage Customs.*

## Introduction

Afghanistan is the homeland of the Aryans, who have a rich ancient history, folklore, and various cultural markers that are respected worldwide based on these very signs. Therefore, we have deemed it appropriate to write this article under the title " Folkloric Traditions of Peryane Village in Alingar District, Noorlam." This article explores the important and key folkloric customs of the village of Peryane through interviews with the elders. In addition to introducing Noorlam and the village of Peryane, this article also encompasses the customs of celebrating the New Year, organizing festivals, conducting weddings, and going on pilgrimages in the same village.

In addition to the list, folklore forms include things like graces, prayers, gestures, symbols, games, the cries and calling of street vendors, quilt and embroidery designs, food recipes, word etymologies, and, based on folk knowledge, the traditional and conventional sounds that people use to give commands to animals, as well as comments that are typically made after bodily emissions, such as sneezes (Korom, n.d.).

Folklore and culture are the foundation of ethnic communities' identities. There is a close relationship between folklore and ethnicity or ethnic identity. Herder's concept of the country gained widespread recognition

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and support in the 19th century. According to him, each country has its own cultural institutions and functions similarly to an organic creature (Silverman, 1991).

### Value of the Research

Pashto language and literature related folkloric topics have not been fully documented and that much of the folklore from various regions is gradually disappearing. If not documented in this kind of articles, it disappears even from living memory. In order to give Pashto folklore a voice we the authors of this article decided to explore some customs of the village of Peryane in the Alingar district of Laghman province. We, the authors understand that collecting and researching the folklore of remote areas must have significant value. Accordingly, we have explored the customs of the village of Peryane based on this value.

### Purpose of the Research

1. To introduce Noorlam Baba and the village of Peryane to the readers.
2. To highlight some folkloric practices of the village of Peryane.

### Research Questions

1. Where is Noorlam Baba's valley and the village of Peryane?
2. What folkloric traditions do the Peryane still practice?

Research Methodology

This research is both library and field-based. The study has been conducted in light of descriptive and interview methods. Interviews were held with the elders of the area.

### Background of the Research

In the work of Mohabat *Cultural Heritage of Laghman, 1397 A.L.),* only the introduction of Noorlam Baba and the region has been provided, without preserving any information regarding customs. Through our article, in addition to the historical background of the region of Pahlawan Baba, two customs have also been recorded (Mohabat, 2018).

### Folklore

An ethnic group's ethnic identity is influenced by its folklore. Folkloric studies may provide us with a basic understanding of ethnic identity. The ethnic identity of Pashtuns, which is implied in Pashto mythology, is no different (Dinakhel, 2019).

The term "folklore" was first used by an Englishman, and thus it is considered an English word. The word "folklore" is composed of two elements: "folk," meaning people, and "lore," meaning knowledge or wisdom. Therefore, folklore signifies the knowledge of the people (Rohi, 1394 A.L., p. 1).

Folklore refers to the traditions of the common people that have persisted since ancient times and differ somewhat from the current commonly accepted beliefs and practices (Azmoon, 2010)

Regarding folklore, Rohi states: “A general theory in the field of folklore is that non-scientific and historically rooted thoughts, beliefs, mentalities, narratives, and so on constitute the main part of folklore” (Rohi, 1365 A.L., p. 93).

The artistic value of folklore lies in the fact that the people express their experiences to enrich their taste. Pashto artistic folklore items are both Pashto and rural, with images and artistic beauties that align with the people's tastes. It does not adopt influences from others; its language is clear and free from pretension, and what one sees or feels is regarded as a treasure of their art.

In terms of life affairs and communication, the value of folk literature is that it preserves events and transmits them from one community to another. It helps people understand the current and future situations, provides direction for society, stimulates thought, promotes the intellectual and mental developmental process of the community, and works towards fostering a cognitive change within society ((Azmoon, 2010)

**Introduction to Noorlam Baba**

Noorlam Baba is the elder brother of Mehter Lam Baba, who had three brothers and three sisters. The shrine of Noorlam Baba is in the village of Ziarat in the Alingar district. Today, people refer to the entire valley as Noorlam Baba Valley, which stretches from the Parwa'i area to the Kandagal area. The village of Noorlam Baba is now known as Ziarat Village (Mohabat, 2018).

Old traditions and ancient Pashto songs indicate that the religion of Moses (peace be upon him) was brought to these people during the time of Bactria. This is evident as the ancient Pashto poems mention the Book of Torah, suggesting that Moses (peace be upon him) may have come here to spread his religion (Pennah, 2024).

Since Noorlam Baba Valley has various villages, each with its own distinct folklore, we focused our research on the folklore of the village of Peryane in this valley.

**The Village of Peryane**

Old stories and traditions reveal that there was once a vast forest in this area, and it was uninhabited. During that time, a large village called Pashto Lam was in the southeastern part of what is now Shterlam and Peryane. Another village, to the north of the current Peryane, had an unknown ancient name but is now referred to as Faqir Baba Kila. It is said that the people of this village became troubled by their goats. At that time, a wandering dervish came to the village, and the villagers shared their painful stories with him. The dervish advised them, saying, “You should sacrifice an animal and throw a piece of meat to the dogs. Wherever the dogs take the meat for eating, build your homes there.” The dogs took the meat to a spring east of the large mosque of Peryane, where shepherds used to bring their livestock for water; this was the place of the fairies. The people then built their homes in that very spot, and it came to be known as Peryane (Pennah, 2024).

**Customs of the New Year in the Village of Peryane**

The people of this region consider wearing new clothes at the arrival of the New Year a sin. Instead, on the first day of the New Year, they eat good food and view spending on their children as a noble act. They believe that if someone eats good food on the first day of the New Year, their life will be similarly good throughout the year. Additionally, on this day, people visit the homes of their close relatives and friends for gatherings (Pennah, 2024).

**Customs of Games in the Village of Peryane**

Games and recreation are essential for relieving human fatigue, refreshing mental and physical strength, and creating joy and happiness. The youth of this region would engage in volleyball, stone throwing, and wrestling games for their enjoyment. These games would sometimes take place in the afternoons during celebrations such as the birth of a child, a circumcision ceremony, or a wedding (Pennah, 2024).

**Special Games**

In addition to the games mentioned before, the residents of the village of Peryane have several special games:

**A. The Lantern Game**

In this festival, all the young men and women of the village go to the high mountains, bringing some food with them. There, they play their game at night, and in the morning, they return home with the lanterns. This game is named after the lanterns (Pennah, 2024).

**Wedding Customs**

**A. Choosing the Bride:** In many Pashto areas, this is done by the mothers and fathers, although some people may handle it based on the mutual consent of the boy and girl.

**B. Engagement:** For this, the girl's father prepares for the event. Relatives are invited, and elders or leaders from the boy's side go to the girl's house, where they have a meal before the marriage contract is finalized.

**C. Dowry:** In the village of Peryane, a certain amount of dowry is determined by the community, and most people adhere to it, although some may negotiate for higher amounts. The dowry often ranged from one hundred thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand Afghanis or fifteen sheep.

**D. Food Preparation:** When a wedding is being prepared, the young men grind wheat into flour. They celebrate this day with great joy, while the women happily clean the rice.

**E. Setting the Wedding Date:** Once the wedding clothes for the bride and groom are ready and all items from both sides are arranged, the wedding date is set. Most people choose Thursday or Monday for the wedding date (Pennah, 2024).

**Celebrating Joy at Weddings**

The joy of weddings was celebrated through songs. In every village, folk singers would either perform or famous singers from distant places would be invited. The happiness of the wedding was expressed through songs and dances, with various instruments and melodies accompanying the festivities (Pennah, 2024).

**Customs of Visiting Shrines**

The people of this region are very devoted to visiting shrines. When someone in a household fell ill, they would visit various shrines, seeking healing. Additionally, they would go to the shrines to fulfill other needs and wishes (Pennah, 2024).

**Customs of Eid al-Fitr**

With the arrival of this festival, most people would wear new clothes. On the first day of Eid, after the morning prayers, they would visit the graves. After making prayers, they would return home. Then, they would head to the village's main mosque for the Eid prayer. After the prayer, they would visit the homes of their relatives, where they would share food according to tradition. Most of the food prepared for Eid was sourced from local mountain produce (Pennah, 2024).

**Eid al-Adha**

The only difference in this festival is the rituals of sacrifice. Each person wishes to acquire a good animal for sacrifice and then slaughter it. They would consume the meat from their sacrifice for several days. If the weather was warm, they would marinate the meat and then hang it on a stick to prevent it from spoiling (Pennah, 2024).

**Customs of Omens**

In Pashto communities, people interpret omens as signs of good and bad outcomes, which have no religious foundation or form. Some of the omens commonly observed in this region include:

**A. Good Omens:** The sound of a crow, eating good food on the first day of the New Year, is considered a good omen. Seeing a cat in the house, scratching the right hand, and witnessing the face of a handsome and cheerful man when viewing the new moon are all seen as signs of prosperity and wealth. Organizing celebrations on Mondays and Thursdays and going on trips are also regarded as indicators of good fortune (Pennah, 2024).

**B. Bad Omens:** Holding wedding and engagement ceremonies between two Eid celebrations is viewed as a sign of misfortune for the groom and bride. Putting the hand under the arm, sitting at the threshold of a door, and sweeping at night are considered causes of bad luck and poverty. A rooster crowing at an inappropriate time and twitching the left eye are seen as signs of danger (Pennah, 2024).

### Customs of Providing Food at Death

In the past, when someone passed away, on the first day, an animal would be slaughtered, and the meat would be cooked and served to all the villagers and guests. This was referred to as "Sam Awal." On the second day, another animal would be slaughtered, and relatives and neighbors would be invited for a meal. On the same day, the grave would also be prepared (Peryane, 2024).

### Customs at the Birth of a Child

In the past, when a child was born, separate gatherings would be held in the home for men and women, lasting up to seven nights. Each group would sing their own songs (Pennah, 2024).

### Customs of House Construction

Historically, houses were built with three stories. The first floor was designated for livestock, while the second and third floors were for human. The buildings were constructed using stones and wood from the mountains (Peryane, 2024).

### Customs of Water Collection

In the past, two specific times were designated for fetching water: midday and late afternoon. During these times, girls would go to the nearby springs in groups or individually to collect the necessary water. Young men would often sit by the springs to watch them, and some young men would choose brides from among the girls they watched there (Pennah, 2024).

### Customs of Fetching Firewood

In the past, two specific times were specified for bringing fire-wood from the mountains. In Autumn, wood was collected to heat homes during winter, while in summer, people were allowed to gather fire-wood for cooking. Individuals would rise early to fetch firewood, calling out to one another. They would gather at a specific spot and then set off to the mountains together. Once they collected the wood, each young man would have his wife or another person accompany him to carry the wood. Some food items would be given to them to help alleviate their fatigue (Elders, 2024).

## Discussion

In the work Mohabbat *Cultural Heritage of Laghman* only a brief introduction to Noorlam Baba is documented, without mentioning village related customs. Through our article, we have not only provided historical context for Noorlam Baba in the village of Peryane but also explored several folkloric practices associated with him (Mohabat, 2018).

## Conclusion

Folklore research has shown that tales, and many other items of folklore, have travelled from culture to culture and across national and linguistic boundaries throughout history. While each people may leave their special impression on a tale, no one culture can claim ownership (Claus, 1991).

Folklore refers to the traditions of the common people that have been passed down from ancient times and differ somewhat from contemporary knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors. A significant part of folklore consists of folkloric customs. In this study, I have examined the folkloric history of Noorlam Baba in the village of Peryane and documented several folkloric customs.

The popular games in Peryane included volleyball, stone throwing, and wrestling. Additionally, there was a unique game called "Chiragh Chob," where boys and girls would go to the high mountains and spend the entire night in festivities; however, this custom has now faded away.

Regarding marriage customs, the girl would initially be considered based on her parents' approval. Once the girl was chosen, negotiations would take place, leading to the engagement. It was essential for the girl to learn household skills before marriage. Once this condition was fulfilled, both families would prepare for the wedding.

During that time, as the teachings of Islam had not fully reached everyone, the people of the village would visit shrines for health and other needs, a practice that has diminished now. For Eid al-Fitr, they would wear new clothes and visit the graves of deceased family members before the Eid prayer. For Eid al-Adha, everyone would prepare to sacrifice an animal.

Various good and bad omens were prevalent in this village, and people believed in them. During the birth of a child, they would play music. Houses were traditionally built with wood and stones, with the first floor allocated for livestock and the second and third floors for human living. Girls would fetch water from the pond or nearby water creeks at two specific times (midday and late afternoon). Fetching firewood from the mountains was customary during two seasons: for cooking in summer and for heating homes in autumn, with restrictions on fetching.

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